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ABSTRACT

In keeping with the trend toward greater parent participation in the education of their children, a preschool intervention program designed to improve the educability of children who would enter kindergarten at the start of a fall term was conducted in one elementary school. The major purpose of the project was to determine if mothers would accept the role of home teachers for their prekindergarten children on a regular basis, using school-prescribed tasks. A sample of 12 mothers and their children was studied. Mother-instruction was measured by a checklist that obtained information about the extent to which mothers engaged in teaching the prescribed activities at home. A teacher observation survey recorded ability of the child to perform supervised skill activities. It was found that mothers in the program did show an active interest in school-home relationships, as evidenced by the regularity with which they accepted the role of home teacher. The pupils in the project, after entering kindergarten, were better adjusted socially and performed better in verbal expression than classmates who had not participated in the project. Based on findings in this program, it is recommended that the parent's involvement as home teachers be extended throughout the school career of their children. (Author)

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MOTHERS AS KEY EDUCATORS OF THEIR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

by

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PS 006346

Practicum report, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, Nova University

September 1973

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this practicum was to develop a preschool intervention project designed to improve the educability of children who would enter the kindergarten at Harwell Road Elementary School in September, 1973. The project was conducted and a checklist was developed to test how routinized the intervention would become. Subsequent investigation revealed that mothers became effective teachers of their children and that the intervention program continued to effect the children after they entered kindergarten. Intervention projects for other children, similar to those at Harwell, may raise their readiness level and extend the educational efforts of many schools.

A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF MOTHER INTERVENTION IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

In recent years, there has been a change in the role of parents in relationship to the schools. The trend has been toward greater participation by parents in the education of their children. Moreover, according to the Task Force on Early Childhood Education, "parent involvement is so important that it should be required wherever feasible."[1] Some educators recognize the potential that parent involvement has for "bridging the gap" between the home and school and have developed parent education programs. The rationale for the programs is that it is possible for parents to become effective teachers of their children before they enter school thereby extending the educational efforts after they enter school.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To determine if mothers would accept the role of teaching their prekindergarten children on a regular basis, using school prescribed tasks. More specifically, the aim of the study was to test the following null hypothesis:

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[1] "Parent - Community Involvement in Early Childhood Education", Education Digest, 38, Number 4, (December, 1972).

Mothers will not accept the role of teaching their prekindergarten children on a regular basis, using school prescribed tasks.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1. Selected literature was reviewed in detail.
2. A workshop was conducted to instruct mothers in the use of selected activities extracted from a handbook published by the Atlanta Public Schools.
3. A checklist was devised for mothers to report progress.
4. The Teacher Observation Pupil Survey was used to measure social behavior. Language mastery was subsumed under the unitary rubric "socialization".
5. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

According to Terrel H. Bell, a nationally known advocate of early education in the home, "Parents should be using the preschool years to increase their child-

ren's self image, heighten their sensory perception, and develop skills which will carry them through more than a decade of formal schooling."[2] He pointed out that helping children build a more powerful intelligence is the direct responsibility of parents and timing is crucial.

Many educators share the premise that the influence of the family is very important. Moreover, they have conducted studies and devised programs to assist parents in the process. Shane and Nelson made a survey of directors of home-school projects and reported that most respondents feel it is appropriate to try to increase readiness through such mediation tactics as enriched environment in early childhood.[3] In fact, more than seventy percent support the notion that preventive and corrective intervention before age six produces positive results. "We must do more in the area of Home Start Programs for the parents" was the conclusion reached by Zigler.[4] He proposed using tele-

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[2]"Parents Should Develop Child's Intelligence Early", The Atlanta Constitution, June 12, 1973, p. 8.

[3]Harold G. Shane and Owen N. Nelson, "What will the Schools Become?", Education Digest, 37, October, 1971, 3.

[4]Edward F. Zigler, "Child Care in the 1970s", 35, November, 1973, 27.

vision to support family life more and inducing large numbers of high schools to begin teaching young people about what is involved in assuming the important role of parenthood.

An investigation of the history of early childhood education reveals that as early as in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, kindergartens were reaching out to transform family life in the slums through parent education.[5] More recent reports reveal that the Gary, Indiana Public Schools initiated city-wide parent education programs because they believe that each child must have a supportive home which provides appropriate mental stimulation.[6] As a result parents grew knowledgeable and articulate about schools, school-community problems and school programs. Norma Radin reports on the results of a Supplementary Kindergarten Intervention Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan that confirmed the hypothesis that compensatory preschool programs can make a significant change in cognitive

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[5] Marion Lazerson, "The Historical Antecedents of Early Childhood Education", Early Childhood Education, (Seventy-First Yearbook of National Society for the Study of Education, No. 1), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.33.

[6] Collins, Benita Mae, "A Portrait of Patsy", Educational Leadership, October, 1971, p. 35.

development.[7] Charles E. Silberman describes how one principal involves the home in the education of children. Meetings and video-taped demonstrations are used to demonstrate for parents, grandparents, older sisters, and brothers how they may help children at home. They report on a signed form the extent of work done at home.[8]

It appears that most of the intervention programs emphasized cognitive areas described by Piaget such as classification, seriation, and representation as well as intense parent involvement in the educational process.

EVALUATION

In order to obtain a descriptive report of the mother intervention program at Harwell School during the summer of 1973, a sample of twelve mothers and their children were selected. The evaluation of the program had two components. One component involved mother intervention and a comparison between children in kindergarten with and without prekindergarten experiences was the second component.

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[7]Radin, Norma, "The Impact of a Kindergarten Home Counseling Program", Exceptional Children, May, 1969, 36, Number 4, pp. 251 -258.

[8]Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, New York: Random House, 1970, p. 110.

Description of Instruments

Mother Intervention was measured by a checklist designed to obtain information about the extent to which mothers engaged in the act of teaching the prescribed activities at home. The checklist was designed in congruence with the activities and with the items scrambled in such a way that there was no set pattern in answering. Regularity was put in to determine how routinized the intervention would become.

The Teacher Observation of Pupil Survey included a series of activities identified by teachers as those in which prekindergarten children usually engage. The checklist was constructed for teachers to use in recording whether or not a child is able to perform specific activities in the skill areas of social behavior, visual perception, auditory perception, self-concept, language, and health and safety. Pupils were observed and a record kept to document if the behavior was Present(4), Present sometimes(3), Absent(2), and if no observation was made of the pupil in the aspect of his behavior(1).

Summary of Findings

All of the twelve mothers attended the workshop which was designed to introduce them to the goals and objectives of the program, to teach them how to make games to play with

their children, how to use selected activities at home, and how to record the number of days they were able to use each activity on the checklist. An inspection of the data obtained from the checklist, which are summarized in Table 1, reveals that three mothers taught all of the activities each day. They never seemed to pass up an opportunity to mediate in the cognitive coping. One mother had employment that required two days of residency away from home. This limited her to a maximum of five days of participation each week. Two other mothers were restricted to six days for similar reasons.

All of the mothers reported that they talked to their children in sentences and gave them simple directions to follow each day. It is assumed that the act of reading bedtime stories has been replaced by television viewing and other activities, and that many children do not accompany their mothers to the supermarket since these two activities received the lowest ratings.

To summarize the findings presented in Table 1, it can be said that the mothers in the program, in fact, did show an active interest in school-home relationships as evidenced by the regularity to which they accepted the role of "home teacher". Therefore, the null hypothesis is refuted. A serendipitous finding disclosed that a

TABLE 1

MEAN FREQUENCIES PER ACTIVITY
OF INTERVENTION BY MOTHERS
SUMMER, 1973

	ACTIVITIES	MEAN
1.	Talked to my child in sentences	6.6
2.	Listened to him tell me about what he had been doing	5.4
3.	Played word games with him	4.2
4.	Gave him simple directions to follow	6.6
5.	Read him stories at bedtime	3.6
6.	Explained the cost of things to him at the store	3.7
7.	When my child said things like "water", I said, "Do you want water?"	6.6
8.	Read to him before he went to sleep	3.6
9.	Helped him understand that two means 2 things, three means 3 things, etc.	4.2
10.	Listened to him tell about things he had seen on television, his playmates, or toys, etc.	5.5
11.	Pointed out words on television, signs, cereal boxes, in books	5.6
12.	Told him how to do simple things	6.1
13.	Played arithmetic games with him such as, store, counting things, naming coins	5.5
14.	Encouraged him to ask questions	6.1

TABLE 2

TEACHER OBSERVATION OF PUPILS SURVEY
CHECKLIST SUMMARY
FOR KINDERGARTEN PUPILS
SEPTEMBER, 1973

Checklist	Does Perform	Performs Sometimes	Does Not Perform	Not Observed
Social Behavior	87.5%	11.5%	1.0%	1.0%
Self-Concept	84.5%	8.5%	2.5%	4.5%
Visual Perception	78.5%	5.0%	4.0%	12.5%
Auditory Perception	70.5%	5.5%	4.0%	20.0%
Language	75.5%	21.5%	3.0%	0.0%
Health and Safety	58.5%	10.0%	30.0%	1.0%

TABLE 3

TEACHER OBSERVATION OF PUPILS SURVEY
CHECKLIST SUMMARY
FOR NON-PREKINDERGARTEN PUPILS
SEPTEMBER, 1973

Social Behavior	70.5%	23.5%	4.0%	2.0%
Self-Concept	79.5%	5.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Visual Perception	74.5%	5.0%	9.0%	11.5%
Auditory Perception	70.5%	3.5%	5.0%	21.0%
Language	62.5%	19.5%	14.0%	4.0%
Health and Safety	53.5%	9.0%	35.5%	2.0%

considerable number of mothers made school visits not to solve the usual behavior problems, but rather to find out more about the kindergarten program, how to help their children make even better adjustments, and to serve as volunteer workers.

The pupils in the project appear to be socially adjusted but not very mature in the language category as is evident in Table 2. However, it is much easier to observe social behavior in a classroom situation than some of the other categories. This is indicated by the percentages in the Not Observed column. A collation of the data in Table 2 with those in Table 3 indicates that the kindergarten pupils in the project were better adjusted socially and performed better in verbal expression than their classmates who had not participated in the project. These data were important to the teacher since completing a form on an individual child provided beneficial diagnostic data to determine skills that needed to be emphasized and served as an evaluative instrument for the participant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations made in this report on the evaluation of the kindergarten pupils in September, 1973, indicated the

general worth of the intervention program. The two components mentioned earlier in the report were mother intervention and teacher observations. The combination of these methods is apparently successful and therefore should be extended. The following specific recommendations are tendered:

1. Efforts should be made to involve more actively still the mothers, who, in this project, showed a healthy interest in the program and in the education of their children.
2. Retain and revise the handbook used in this project so that the activities are explained with greater specificity.
3. Extend the involvement of parents as "home teachers" throughout the school career of their children to insure that this phase of the educational program will be a continuum.

APPENDIX A

THE HANDBOOK

Harwell Road Elementary School
631 HARWELL ROAD, NORTHWEST
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30318

TELEPHONE 799-1956

Dear Parent:

We are happy your child will enter kindergarten at Harwell Road School this year. This will probably be his first school experience and we want him to enjoy learning and to do well in school. We know that each child is different but we can do many things to help all children grow in a wholesome way, by working together.

Some things can be done in school and some can be done at home. We would like to suggest some activities which you might do with your prekindergarten child to help him develop desirable habits for a more enjoyable school experience. We are enclosing a brief description of some activities in the areas of Language, Reading and Arithmetic.

It is important to remember that you do not need much time or a special place in which to do these things. Many activities can be done while you are cleaning, cooking, or doing the laundry. Moreover, we know that many of you have already been doing similar things with your children.

<u>The idea stressed here is togetherness, home and school, to help him reach his potential</u>.

Sincerely,

Alice Mickle, Teacher

Mildred Walton, Principal

Why bring in the home?

Can't the school do the job?

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Home and School

Must work together for a

- CONFIDENT
- HAPPY
- SUCCESSFUL
- WELL-ROUNDED CHILD
- A CHILD WHO BELIEVES IN HIMSELF

On the following pages you will see the things your child does in school and things you can do with him at home to help him learn.

Language

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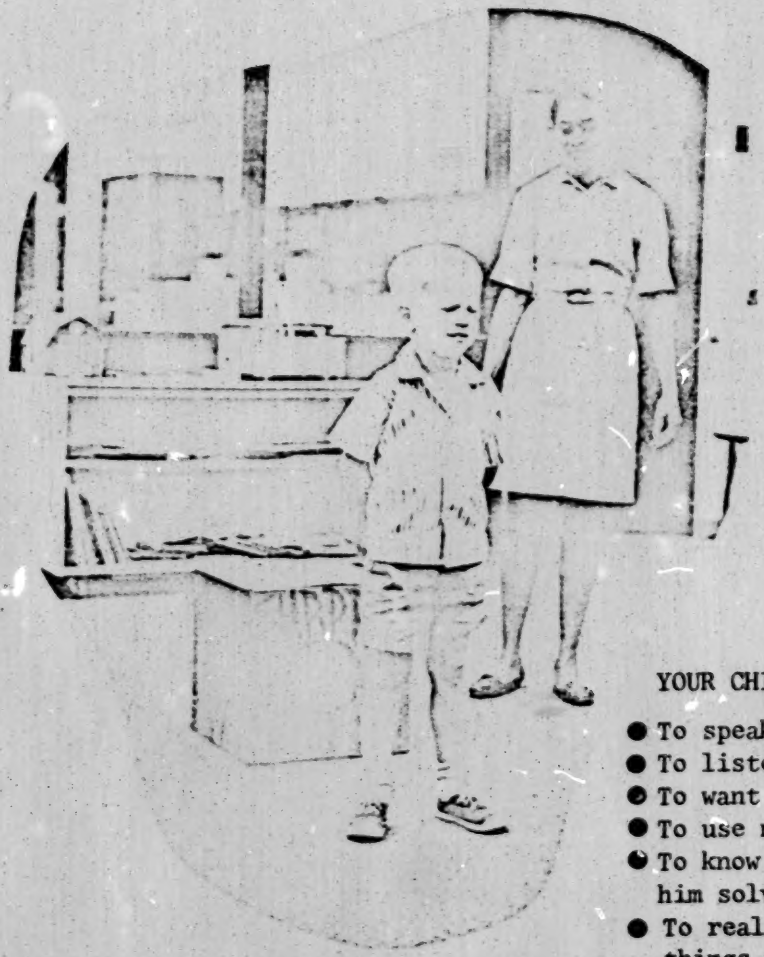
IN SCHOOL

YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING ABOUT LANGUAGE

When he ....

- ▲ Tells stories
- ▲ Acts out stories
- ▲ Talks about his trips and experiences
- ▲ Recites a poem
- ▲ Tells what happened first, second, etc.



AT HOME

YOU ARE TEACHING LANGUAGE

When you.....

- ■ Talk to your child in sentences (Avoid "uh huh", say "yes you may have the paper box on the table".
- ■ LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN to his ideas
- ■ Help him to make puzzles, simple games
- ■ Play word games, guessing games
- ■ Enjoy books with him
- ■ Give him simple directions to follow

YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING

- ● To speak well
- ● To listen
- ● To want to talk
- ● To use new words
- ● To know that words can help him solve problems
- ● To realize that he can do things well

Reading

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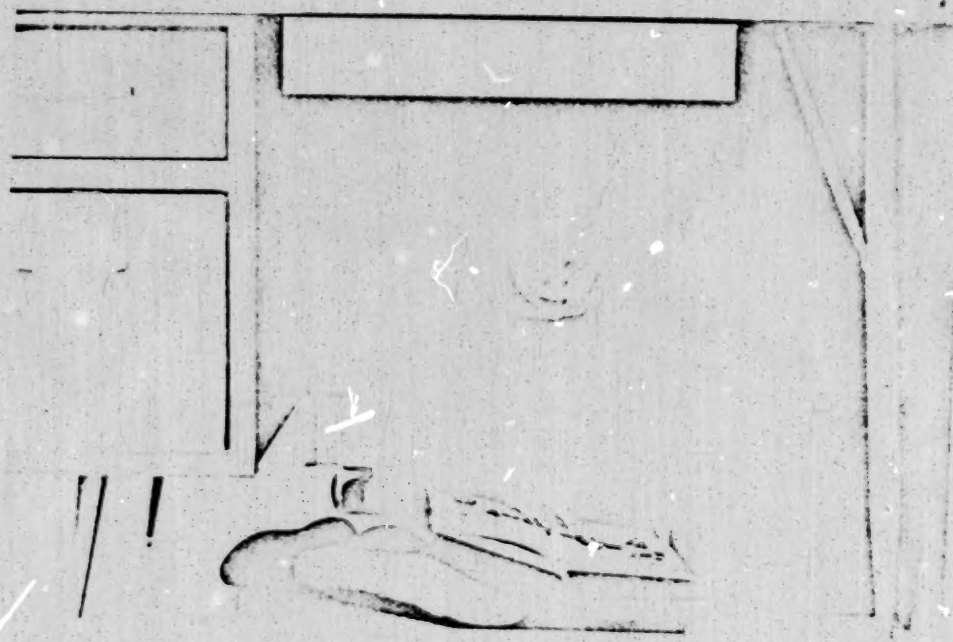
IN SCHOOL

YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING ABOUT READING

When he ....

- ▲ Looks at picture books
- ▲ Listens to stories
- ▲ Sees words on things in the room
- ▲ Watches his teacher write his stories
- ▲ Recognizes his name when written
- ▲ Knows some of the letters and sounds of the alphabet



AT HOME

YOU ARE TEACHING READING

When you....

- ■ Tell and read him stories
- ■ Point out words on T.V., cereal boxes, signs
- ■ Play simple matching games
- ■ Enjoy reading yourself
- ■ Answer his questions about words
- ■ Encourage older child to read to the younger ones.

YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING

- ● That spoken words can be written
- ● To want to read
- ● To like books
- ● To understand the importance of reading

... a few things

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"I can't buy all that stuff you need for those activities."

This is all you need for everything we talk about.

Materials You Need

- ▲ Scissors
- ▲ Crayons
- ▲ Paper
- ▲ Paste
- ▲ Old Magazines or Gift Catalogs
- ▲ Storybooks

+

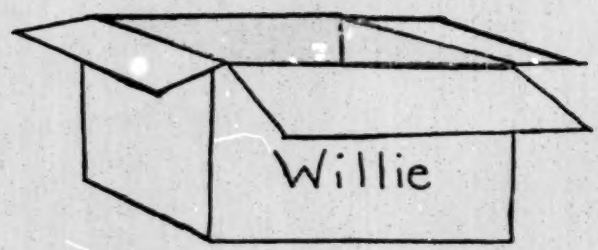
- ● one willing parent and
- ● one child

"I don't have any room for him to put this stuff!"

A cardboard box will hold it all. Put your child's name on it.

Find a special corner for it.

Remember it belongs to him. Get another box for baby sister or an older child.



HOME ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

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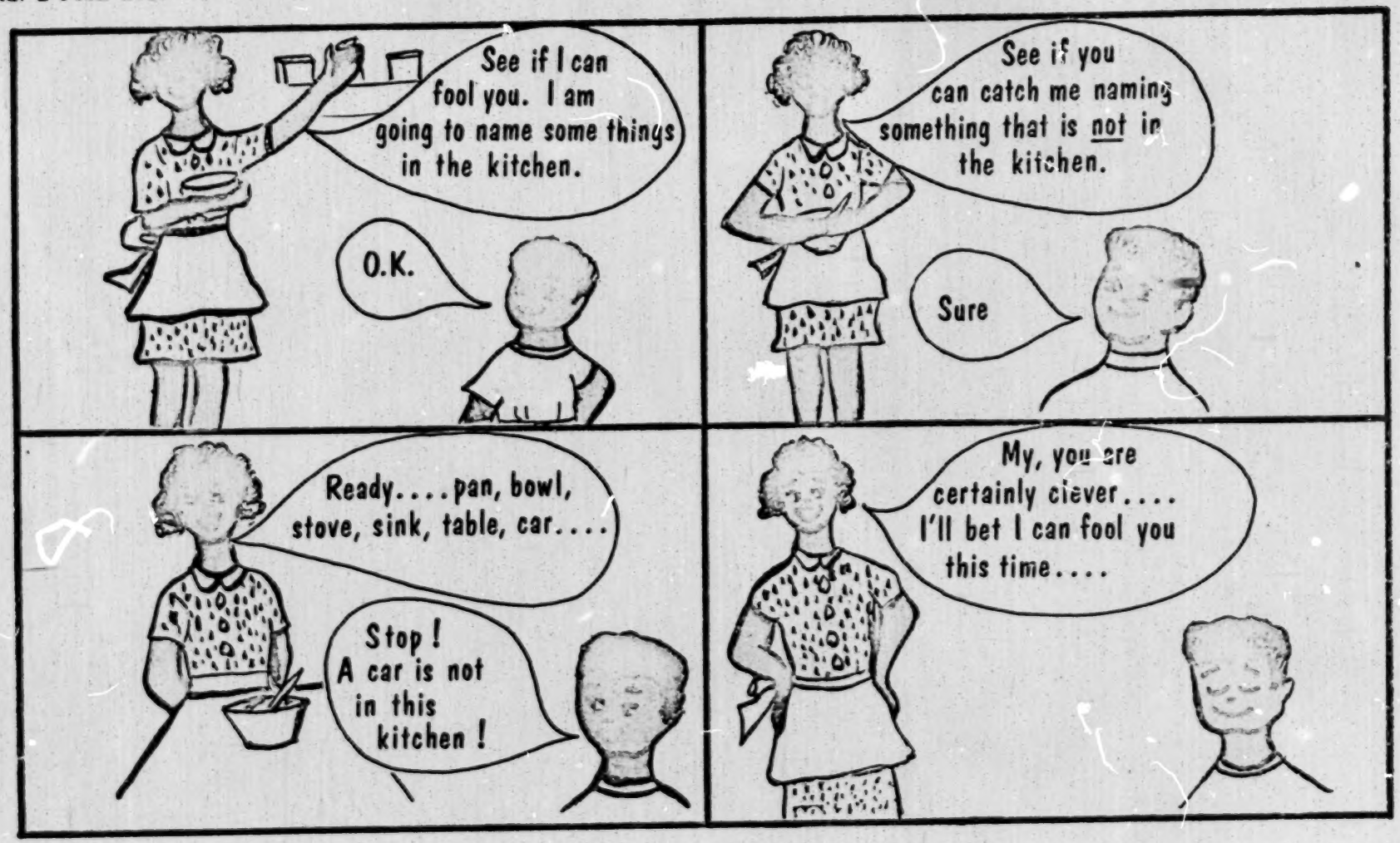
LANGUAGE READING

Here are a few games you can try with your child at home

CAN I FOOL YOU?


See if I can fool you. I am going to name some things in the kitchen.
O.K.
See if you can catch me naming something that is not in the kitchen.
Sure
Ready....pan, bowl, stove, sink, table, car....
Stop! A car is not in this kitchen!
My, you are certainly clever.... I'll bet I can fool you this time....

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HOME-ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

read.. listen..

LANGUAGE READING (Continued)

Answer his questions about "What is this word?" or "What is this letter?" When he sees a commercial about a cereal or detergent, show him the names on the boxes. Let him retell some of the T.V. stories.

When your child attempts to write his name, tell him the names of the letters and show him how to make them according to the chart in the booklet. This is how he will learn them in school.

Denise Ann Bill Joe

Read Stories to Your Child. Any of the little books you can get in the supermarket or dime store are usually appropriate. The library has an even better selection that you may borrow.

Read clearly, occasionally pointing out a word that may begin like his name or a word repeated often in the story.

Let the child sit beside you so he can see the pictures.

Answer his questions about the pictures and stories. (Big sister or brother may enjoy reading to a younger child).

Show him how to make a puzzle by cutting out a picture, pasting it on a piece of cardboard and then cutting it zig zag. He can make an envelope to keep it in or put it in a paper sack or box.

LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN, - Yes, we as adults must remember this. Children are important, too. They have things to tell us. We as teachers and parents must listen to their ideas and encourage them to talk.

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HOME ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

LANGUAGE-READING (Continued)

encourage . .

Tell About the Picture. Cut out a picture from a magazine. Say to the child, "Tell me everything you see in it" or "Make up a story about this."

Word Games

Say to the child, "The opposite of up is down."

What is the opposite of big?" (Tell him the answers until he understands)

Use other opposites such as:

high	low	pretty	ugly
wide	narrow	wet	dry
soft	hard	old	new
fat	skinny	young	old
rich	poor	clean	dirty
in	out	shiny	dull
off	on	day	night

praise --

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Play Classification Games. Use objects around the house or pictures from magazines.

"Find all the blue things in this room" (or red, yellow)

Example: "Name the pieces of furniture you see" (The child is expected to say table, chairs, sofa, bed, dresser or any other furniture he sees.)

"Name clothing a girl would wear" (or boy would wear)

"Name some animals" (Later you might ask for wild animals or farm animals)

"Name different kinds of buildings" (Such answers as house, fire station, department store, apartment, dog house, barn, skyscraper, church, store or any other building the child can name would be acceptable.)

"Name some foods" (Later you will ask him to name different vegetables, fruit, meat, or cereals.)

Cut and Group. Let him cut out pictures and put them in piles according to tools, furniture, big and little things, colors or any group he chooses. Ask him why he grouped them the way he did.

enjoy

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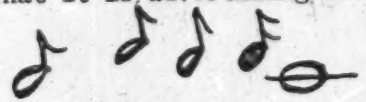
HOME ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

LANGUAGE-READING (Continued)

Play a Color Game. "I have on a red blouse." "Find something else in the room that is red." Later on you will ask: "What color is my blouse?" After he does this well say, "Name something that is not red."

Listening to T.V. (as well as watching) Ask your child to close his eyes and listen to the music on the Saturday morning cartoons. See if he can guess which cartoon is coming on. Together watch a T.V. commerical and see if you can guess what it is advertizing before the brand is named.



Likenesses and Differences

Use three objects. Two will be alike. One should be different. Say, "Here are three things, which two are the same or just alike? Show me the one that is different."

You will have to help your child until he understands. Next you may try marbles, , glasses, , plates, , fruit, , or anything you have available.

play .. talk ..

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HOME ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

LANGUAGE-READING

Surprise Box

Put pieces of cloth, bar of soap, spoon, small bottle, old earring, or any small object in the box. Put a cloth over the child's eyes. Say to him, "Reach in and get something and see if you can tell what it is by feeling it."

Tell Me All About It. Name an animal or an object and have your child tell everything he can to describe it such as size, shape, color, weight, action.

Example: Dog - It has four legs, it's brown, it has a long tail, it barks, it's smaller than the table.

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Play games with relationship words such as up, down, into, between, outside, around, through, behind, above, beneath, over-some, all, before, after, - beginning, middle, end, - more, most, - less, least, - last next - because, when, whenever, while, meanwhile, toward, away, from near, but, or, for, neither, nor, both.

Example: "Put the toy under the chair; put it beside the chair, put it on the chair; put it between the chairs; put it behind the chair.

Arithmetic

IN SCHOOL

YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING ABOUT....

ARITHMETIC

When he....

- ▲ Counts 10 objects
- ▲ Matches three birds to the number 3
- ▲ Can tell which group is more and which is less
- ▲ Learns that things have different shapes such as triangles, circles, squares, and rectangles
- ▲ Arranges objects in order of smallest to largest
- ▲ Plays games with toy money

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YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING

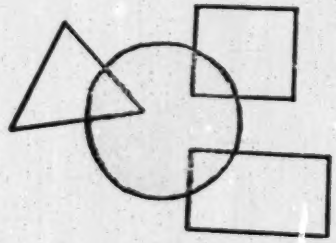
- ● To understand arithmetic
- ● To use arithmetic when buying things
- ● To enjoy working with numbers
- ● That arithmetic can help him in his daily life
- ● To use new words: as shapes, more, less, smallest, largest
- ● To arrange things in order or sequence

AT HOME

YOU ARE TEACHING ARITHMETIC

When you....

- ■ Tell him the names of coins
- ■ Let your child help you measure when cooking
- ■ Explain to him the cost of things when he goes to the store
- ■ Play simple arithmetic games with him
- ■ Help him to understand that when he counts that two means 2 things and three means 3 things, etc. (Children often count to 20, but do not understand counting)



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1 2 3 4...Fun

HOME ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

ARITHMETIC

Putting Things in Order. Let the child arrange leaves (or rocks, sticks, pieces of paper, toys) from smallest to largest.

See if he can name people in the family from shortest to tallest, youngest to oldest.

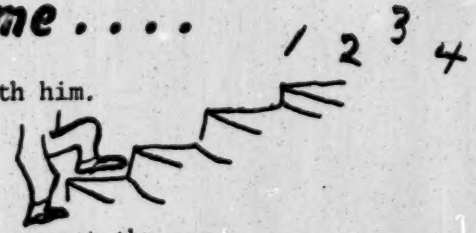
Paula, Lisa, Andrea.....

Put water in some old glasses or cans about the same size and have the child put them in order from empty to full..

Tell your child a short story and see if he can tell it back to you.

Once upon a time....

Counting. Count the steps as you walk up them with him.



Let him count the items of groceries as he helps you put them up.

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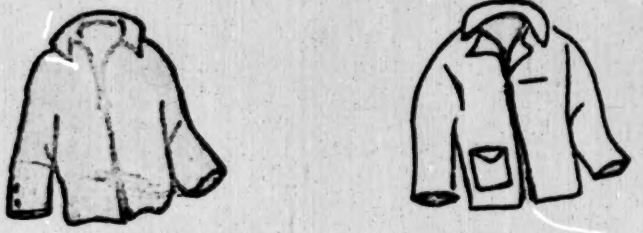
ARITHMETIC (Continued)

Can he count five pennies?

When he has a dime and buys a nickel candy bar does he know he should get change?

Give him a handful of small rocks. Ask him to put 3(or 4 or 5) in each pile.

Matching. Cut out two pictures of jackets from a catalogue. Say, "Cut out some boys to wear these jackets." Cut out any number of items and see if he can match the right number of children with the objects.



APPENDIX B

MOTHER INTERVENTION CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST FOR MOTHERS

Direction: Please check the number of days you were able to participate in each activity with your child this week.

Activities	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Didn't get to it yet
1. Talked to my child in sentences								
2. Listened to him tell me about what he had been doing								
3. Played word games with him								
4. Gave him simple directions to follow								
5. Read him stories at bedtime								
6. Explained the cost of things to him at the store or while playing store								
7. When my child said things like "water", I said, "Do you want water?"								
8. Read aloud to him before he went to sleep								
9. Helped him understand that two means 2 things, three means 3 things, etc.								
10. Listened to him tell me about things he had seen on T.V., his playmates or toys								
11. Pointed out words on T.V., ceral boxes, signs, in books								
12. Told him how to do simple tasks								
13. Played arithmetic games with him, such as store, counting things, naming coins								
14. Encouraged him to ask questions								

APPENDIX C

TEACHER OBSERVATION PUPIL SURVEY

TEACHER OBSERVATION PUPIL SURVEY (TOPS)

Child's Name _____ Sex _____

School Name _____ Teacher _____

Directions: Listed below are activities in which prekindergarten pupils are usually engaged. After observing an individual child perform these activities, score according to your opinion whether or not he successfully performs an activity.

If you have not observed the child perform a specific activity, circle (1) in the appropriate item column. If the child, in your opinion does not perform the task successfully, circle (2) in the appropriate column; if he sometimes performs the task successfully, circle (3) in the appropriate column; and if he usually performs the task successfully, circle (4) in the appropriate column.

Checklist: Social Behavior	1st or 2nd Week				Last Week			
	Not Observed	No	Sometimes	Yes	Not Observed	No	Sometimes	Yes
1. Cries when mother leaves in morning.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2. Takes care of own clothing needs (buttons, zippers, etc.)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3. Takes care of personal bathroom needs.								
4. Gets materials needed for work or play	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5. Puts material back in place.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
6. Accepts and carries out responsibility	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
7. Shares appropriately with others	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
8. Abides by group-established rules (when going on a trip, playing a game, other).	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
9. Receptive and expressive participating in group discussion	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
10. Talks informally to others (peers, teachers, other adults).	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
11. Shows consideration for others (takes his turn when playing, asks others to let him play with them, offers to help others, and invites them to play with him)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
12. Has good table manners	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4